BLACKLIGHT

THIS ISSUE IS

How to keep the relationship **HOT** even though you're far apart

Why Black art is **HOT** but Black galleries are not

Who's considered the **HOT** candidate by gays

Fashions that are **HOT** but keep you cool

Grace tells what's **HOT** and what's not

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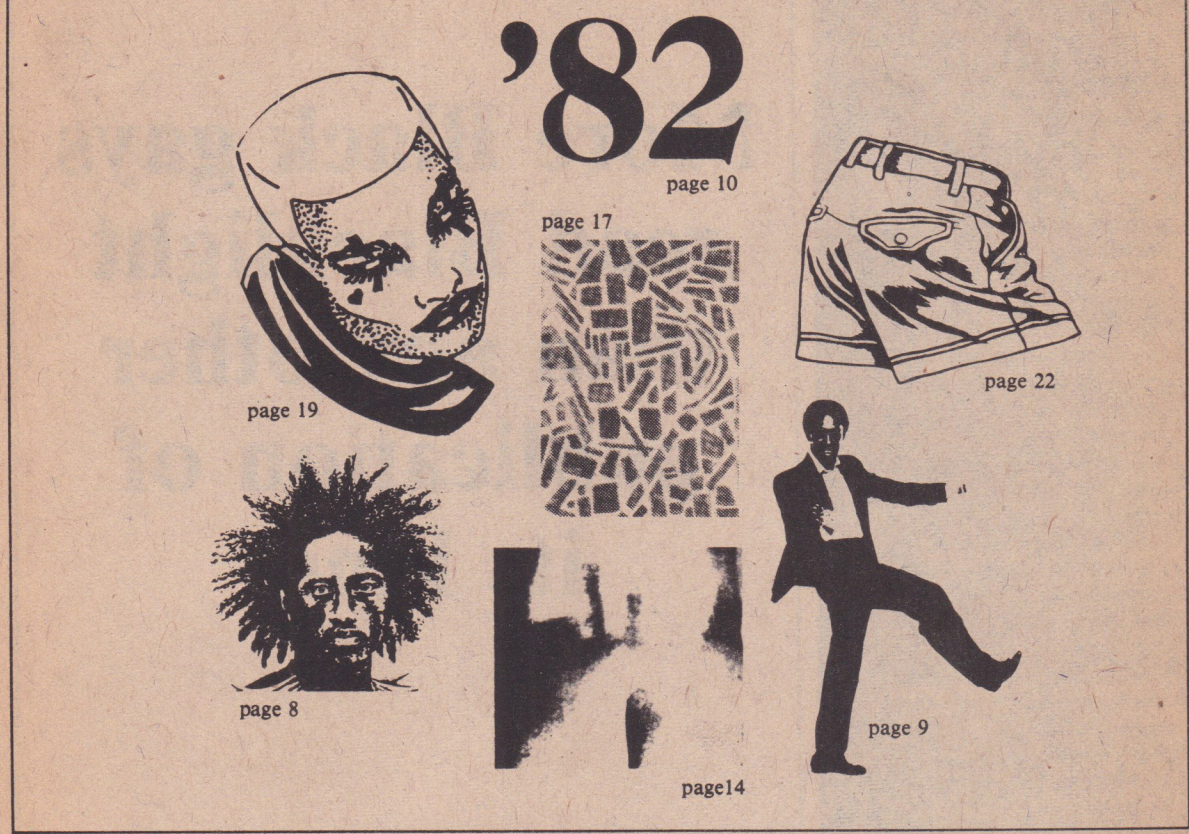
BLACKLIGHT

Vol. 3, No. 5



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BLACKLIGHT

Publisher and Editor
Sidney S. Brinkley

Design Director
Talfourd J. Pierce, Jr.

Illustrator
Ossippio

Art Editor
Thurlow Evans-Tibbs, Jr.

Contributing Editors
Tania Abdullahad
Grace
Leonardo Knight
David Pitts
Adrian Stanford
James S. Tinney

Contributing Illustrators
Michael Busby
Eric Marlowe
Steven Robinson

Contributing Photographers
Butch
Sharon Farmer
Leigh Mosley
Lee Whorton

Administrative
First Class Communications

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More Black gays read Blacklight than any other publication of its kind.

BLACKLIGHT

First, not because it's the only, but because it's the best.

The congregation responds

Reverend McCoy's article [*The Failure of the Black Church,* Vol. 3, No. 4] was read with great interest. It reminded me of an incident that occured in my church. I belong to a church with a large Black gay contingent. Our pastor, for the most part, is a decent man. Most of his sermons are inspiring. One Sunday he delivered a sermon on gays—"lesbians and homosexuals" to be precise. It was nothing short of an attack complete with all of the negative adjectives. Being one of the more politically aware members, I marshalled four of "the children" together and we had a nice, intelligent conversation with him about his sermon. Included in our group was the organist and the choir director, key people in the church. We explained our unhappiness with his sermon and the potential divisiveness that sermons like that could cause. Apparently he got our point for that happened nearly a year ago and he hasn't said anything about gays since. His talk of sin is confined to very general catagories. I grew up in the church and I love it, even with its problems or "failures" as she says. There is change, but one has to fight very hard to make it happen.

George Parks
Baltimore, Md.

The failure of the Black church is not that it turned out homosexuals but that it allows other sinners to stay. She [Renee McCoy] says that the church has caused homosexuals to wander through the wilderness, indeed you must. The church has always stood on the principal that homosexuals are lost. It is not for the church to change but for the homosexual to do so.

Brother Paul Davis
Washington, D.C.

The article on the failure of the Black church was very timely and said many things that needed to be said to the church and about it. I copied the article and passed it out to several church members. It caused quite a debate. Someone passed a copy to the pastor and, being somewhat progressive, he scheduled it for a discussion group we have on Saturdays. That didn't turn out so great; a lot of old fears and prejudices came out but it did get people to talking about the subject. Thanks.

Name and address withheld by request

Though Ms. McCoy makes some very valid points in her article on the Black church, I have a problem with the fact that she apparently left the Black church and moved to a white church, MCC. Is dealing with white racism easier than dealing with Black homophobia? Come back "home" Ms. McCoy; we need you here, they don't.

R. Banks
Washington, D.C.

Don't stop! Don't stop!

I want to congratulate you and the staff on a fine issue of Blacklight. It looked very professional. The concept on rejuvenation was excellent. Every issue gets better and better and the hard work shows. Though the paper is already a "success" in one sense, financial success cannot be too far away. I worked for a small press in Chicago and I know how much effort can go into a publication.

Stephen Lawrence
Philadelphia, Pa.

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Letters should be addressed to: BLACKLIGHT, P.O. Box 56255, Washington, D.C. 20011. All letters should be signed, but names will be withheld upon request.

James Baldwin

James Baldwin "comes out" at gay forum

For the first time in his career, novelist James Baldwin openly identified with the gay community by addressing more than 200 persons at a forum sponsored by The New York Chapter of Black and White Men Together (BWMT-NY). The forum was held June 5 in the gay synagogue known as Simchat Torah on the west side of Greenwich Village.

Speaking with candor and openness about his own homosexuality, Baldwin claimed that his life-long sexual orientation had never been a secret, but he had not always felt it was necessary, "or anybody's business," to openly affirm it.

"Before I was seven years old," he said, "there were so many labels on my back beginning with 'nigger.' By the time I was 14, I went through a kind of nervous breakdown, which happened when I was a preacher, and by the time I was 17, I had survived all the labels, including the label of 'faggot.' It wasn't and it isn't, easy."

Baldwin briefly mentioned his becoming a Pentecostal minister in Harlem as a youth, and then declared, "I still consider myself a Christian," although he was careful to point out that he did not necessarily identify with institutionalized Christianity. Similarly, he explained that, while he is gay, he does not necessarily identify with all of the institutionalized and "ghettoized" gay community.

Lashing out at the "mercantile morality" of both the Right Wing and the gay community itself, Baldwin depicted racism in the gay community as merely an extension of racism in the wider white western societies. "White folks have nothing whatever to contribute to morality; they have nothing whatever to contribute to the fashioning of a new and better social order," stated Baldwin. "They are morally bankrupt."

"Even the so-called humanist thinkers are morally bankrupt!" he exclaimed. Baldwin noted his personal acquaintance with many of the famous European humanists and existentialists, but declared them unfit to lead the world out of its dependency upon "slaves, colonies, and war."

Gays, like Blacks, he believes, are being used as scapegoats for society's own fears. They are becoming victims of the anger whites feel when they see that capitalism must, of necessity, give way to a new economic order of socialism. "Yet even white socialism seems unable to eliminate its racism," he added.

He also claimed that white gays exemplify the same racism, by and large. He referred to the fact that Gore Vidal, a celebrated gay writer, has referred to him as a "jungle bunny."

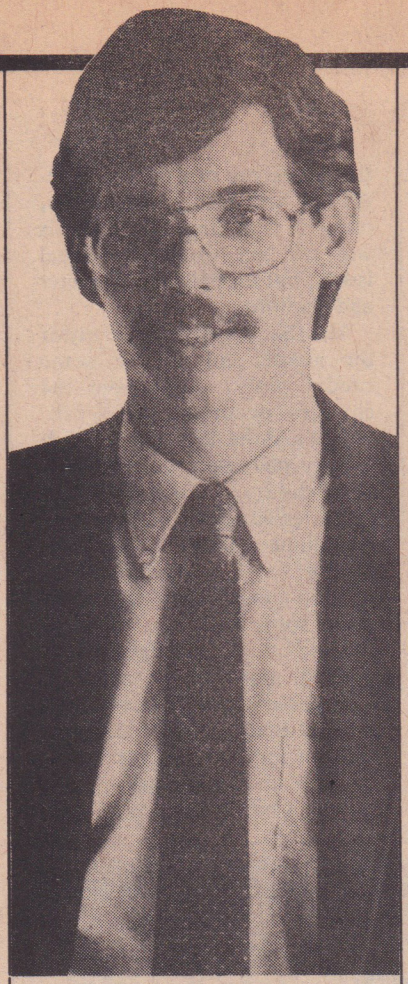
In answer to a question from the audience, Baldwin seemed to indicate that his own political consciousness as an open gay advocate has evolved over a period of time. It began with the writing of his book, *Giovanni's Room*. "That was something I had to do; I had to work through it," he said, in reference to writing the book. It is no secret that it is partly autobiographical.

More recently, he admitted, his consciousness has brought him to the point where, in his latest novel, *Just Above My Head*, he is able to write freely about the homosexual relationship of two Blacks. (His previous works dealt with sex between whites, or between Blacks and whites, but not between Blacks.)

He concluded, "One has to reject, in toto, the implication that one is abnormal. That is a socialogical and societal delusion that has not truth at all. I'm no more abnormal than General Douglas MacArthur."

—James S. Tinney

A talk with Barry's campaign liaison for gays



Dave Vos

Dave Vos, 28, has been appointed by Mayor Barry to serve as campaign liaison to the gay community. Vos has been active in Democratic Party politics for the past ten years. Prior to moving to Washington in 1981, the University of Michigan graduate was a legislative assistant to Democrats in the Michigan Senate. Since coming to Washington, Vos has been an active member of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club and was press secretary for the Greater Washington Americans for Democratic Action. To better aquaint the Black gay community with Mr. Vos, Blacklight caught up with this busy young man one recent afternoon and conducted this mini-interview.

Q. How did you get the position of campaign laison to the gay community?

A. There was a list of 10 or 12 names originally but some others under consideration had jobs or other committments that they couldn't give up, and turned down the offer. They finally got to me and I accepted.

Q. How much does the position pay?

A. I'm paid $200–$250 per week.

Q. What brought you to Washington?

A. A relationship. I had been seeing someone for a while and I decided to move here to be with him.

Q. You have been involved in Democratic politics for several years. Do you have any plans to run for office someday?

A. I used to, but I'm not actively planning that now. I just want to be effective, to do some of the technical things to help the mayor be reelected.

Q. Do you feel being openly gay to be a political handicap?

A. Sure. Anything that alienates you from the general public is a handicap. But Washington is better than some other cities when it comes to that. I love D.C.

Q. Is it difficult for you as a white person to deal politically in a city that is predominately Black?

A. No. I'm used to urban politics. Before I came to Washington I was active in Detroit politics.

Q. Whom are you supporting for the chair of the City Council?

A. I'm not sure. I like some of the things Dave Clarke has to say but Dixon has been more supportive of Gays so I would probably vote for Dixon. But I'm not sure. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Dixon will probably win by a landslide.

Gays not an issue at Dixon reception

Washington, in the midst of what many consider the most interesting political campaigns in the city's history, is highly charged with the drama, intrigue, and wonderment of the sociopolitical events that provide the basis for major political campaigning.

One such event occurred Saturday evening, June 5 on behalf of the re-election bid of City Council Chairman Arrington Dixon. A reception, sponsored by resident political activist and former school board candidate Philip E. Pannell, was held at the Evans-Tibbs Gallery.

Two of the more attractive things about Washington are its multi-faceted character and the unexpectedness with which something new is discovered. What made this event unexpected and special was that, in this gathering of over one hundred Black men and women, many of them gay, the emphasis was not on specific political issues, but on political character and tradition.

Mr. Dixon spoke with many of the guests and offered some candid observations about the changes occurring in Washington and the direction in which the city may be going. During my conversation with the candidate, he expressed what appeared to be a genuine concern that Black people ". . . constructively develop a consistent tradition to carry forth into this political system," and, throughout the evening, many guests expressed their commitment to developing a sound Black political identity.

In his remarks Dixon reminded some and enlightened others about his background and life in Washington. He explained how his having lived in and seen this city "from east of the river to the $100,000 homes of Ward 4" has provided him with an understanding and appreciation of what can be done and how best to go about doing it.

The surprising thing about all of this was that not once during the evening was any question raised concerning the gay community. I had expected someone to ask Mr. Dixon for, at least, a position statement relative to Black gays. No one did.

The emphais was on Blackness and the recognition that our gayness does not put us outside of the major concerns of Blacks and the issues of racism, economics, and education.

—Michael Sainte-Andress

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Pat Harris has reception for Black gays at Exile

In an effort to meet the Black gay community, the Harris campaign held a reception at the Exile on July 15. The Exile, a white gay bar that features a large Confederate flag over the bar, has a reputation as an allegedly racist establishment and many Blacks wondered why Harris would have a reception there.

The affair, which attracted approximately forty Blacks, was not as successful as other Harris appearances since many Black gays stayed away. The reception was to have been co-sponsored by two Black social clubs, The Best of Washington and Family, Inc. However, as dissent began to mount, the Best of Washington decided to pull out and informed the Harris campaign that its members would not attend.

After several Blacks present strongly denounced the mayoral candidate for appearing at the Exile, Harris explained she had known nothing of the negative reputation of the club and would be willing to meet Black gays at a more suitable location.

BLACKMAIL

continued from page 3

Grace*ous* . . .

Who is Grace? Is she a real person? Her column is the first thing I turn to in every issue to see what she has to say. I think it is very well done and is very interesting. I will say one thing for Grace, and that is she is fair. If a club gives an event that she thinks is tacky, she will say so. An if one is given that is nice, she says that too. (I agree with her opinion about The Pinochle Club's Valentine's Day affair. It was very tired and that needed to be said.) Keep it up.

C.P.
Washington, D.C.

I am continually questioned about the identity of Grace, but due to the nature of her column, she must remain anonymous. She is a real, live, walking, talking Washingtonian who knows all and doesn't mind telling it. So, be careful. And by the way, who is C.P.?—Ed.

. . . *and un*Grace*ous*

Having lived to be the ripe old age of 33, I have seen many ups and downs in life. Throughout, one thing remains consistent: We as Blacks and gays have to fight 100 times as hard to maintain self respect. In light of the fact we have Reagan, white people both gay and straight, our parents, and other Blacks are all too happy to hear about our hardships, murders and robbings (sic), and suicides. We don't need Grace to tell us when we have bad breaks. Especially when behind it all is the underlying pleasure of telling the world that "A" can't pay his or her rent, or that "B" and "C" can't live together in love anymore. If Grace is really into gossip, then she should get a job at the *National Enquirer*. When "B" and "C" break up, only their friends should know about it, not the general public. Remember the old saying: "If you can't say something nice about someone don't say anything at all."

Nathan S. Wilks
Washington, D.C.

Grace replies: *Oh dear, it seems that Grace has again touched a tender spot in one of our readers. She would like to inform Mr. Wilks that she too has seen many ups and downs in her life. But she must take issue with Mr. Wilks' head-in-the-sand attitude. If you want to look like an ostritch, dear, go out and buy yourself a feather boa. Grace feels that, if we ignore the negative things in our community, we are not only deceiving others, we are deceiving ourselves. And Grace does not believe in ignorance or deception. Finally, since Mr. Wilks seems fond of old sayings, Grace would like to remind him of another one: "Practice what you preach." Grace will say no more.*

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Planting the Seeds of a Black Gay Renaissance

by William Smithson

Yemonja *by The Blackheart Collective*

While there have always been Black artists who also happened to be gay, in most cases their sexuality was kept separate from their work. But across the country there appears to be an unprecedented emergence of artists who recognize the influence that being gay has had on them and have incorporated that influence into their art. In Los Angeles there is Nuba, a fledging group of actors. In San Francisco there is the singer Blackberri. In Detroit there is artist Ron Wilson. An, in New York there is a group of Black gay men who call themselves The Blackheart Collective.

The collective is a group of writers who have produced a remarkable collection of poetry and prose about Blackness, gayness, and life. They named their effort *Yemonja* after an African goddess. As explained in the preface, "In the Yoruba language Yemonja means 'Mother of Fishes,' she is the primeval mother from whose womb the universe becomes manifest . . . In one 'Pataki' or myth it is told how Yemonja came to a land or kingdom called Lado where only adodis (homosexuals) lived. She fell passionately in love with a male adodi and since then she has been the protectress of all the adodi or homosexuals."

This is the first time I have heard African spirituality being linked to homosexuality, and African themes can be found throughout the book. In his essay entitled "Some Thoughts on Black Gay Liberation," editor Isaac Jackson writes:

> In many African societies affection between men is openly expressed, even if it never results in sexual activity . . . in the African-American community it is taboo for Black men to be openly affectionate. Being a Black man who loves men, Black men, is a radical statement in these United States . . . We have to change all of this.

Some of the poetry is political in nature, such as Vincent Thomas' "What Shall We Do With The Maid?" which describes a white matron's problems with her newly politicized Black maid, Estelle:

What shall we do with the maid?
M'dear?
Just what shall we do with the maid?
I gave her a lecture on good servitude.
She narrowed her eyes and said
"I don't mean to be rude
But there's only one fact to be taken for true;
I'm workin' for me, sweetie, not just for you . . ."

But it is not all politics; some of it is just beautiful, such as "Ashanti Kites" by Salih Michael Fisher:

Now we shall fly . . . ebony lord of beauty in blackness far beyond the lands of deep hearts . . . far beyond hidden temples . . . At eve . . . the bushes shall sing in melodies of the oracles past . . .
We shall lay our hearts upon the Ibo cloths of rich designs to let them dry
Smiling in ecstasy I see your soul pinned to the Ashanti kites of yellow, black, and green as our realities crisscross in dreams not spoken of . . . destined to return tomorrow.

Illustration from Yemonja

But there is more than poetry on the pages of *Yemonja*. There is a complete short story, and an excerpt from a play by Yves Lubin entitled "Risin' To The Love We Need." Here he describes the main character, Miss Thing. And she is reminiscent of all the Miss Things we have ever known:

Had you been driving on the West Side Highway by tenth street last Thursday, you'd seen Miss Thing turning it out at 4 a.m., caped in flawless purple satin, splashed with gold beads & trimmed in black ostrich, she leaned her six foot frame against the fire-box, looking so sexy in this hot-pink dress slit on both sides to the waist, sashed with a gigantic bow. Plucked eyebrows, purple mascara round the eyes to make them look large and luminous, cheekbones that won't quit, thick green flutters, chain-shaped silver pendants framing her coffee colored full face, ruby reds & loads of rouge to hide the shaving marks, reeking of avon, she was bad . . .

We follow Miss Thing through several episodes including one where she is picked up by a Puerto Rican who thinks she's "real", then shoots her when he discovers otherwise.

Yemonja works on two levels: politically and artistically. Here we have a group of Black men—Black *gay* men—who are neither afraid nor ashamed of their sexuality and use it as a basis for their art. And while it is not great literature, it is written well enough to warrant purchasing.

Their second journal is scheduled for release this winter and, if it is as good as this one, The Blackheart Collective could very well be at the forefront of what may become the Black Gay Renaissance.

RECORDINGS

One for the Money, . . .

Ji. *Junior* (Mercury SRM-1-4043)

Several weeks before Junior Giscombe was introduced to American audiences, his impending debut was the subject of much talk among music critics. Giscombe, a Black from London, England, was being favorably compared to Stevie Wonder. The first release from his album entitled *JI* was an upbeat song called "Mama Used To Say" which became a hit here in the States, and was an even bigger hit in Britain. Though it was a nice song, I was not impressed. Then "Too Late" was released and I began to take a greater interest in "Junior."

The song tells the story of an alcoholic and the effect of his drinking on his wife and children. The topic is unusual and the music very good. And after listening to the album, I understand the reasons for the comparison between Junior and Stevie. While he does not sound like Wonder, the musical and vocal arrangements are reminiscent of Stevie.

Giscombe co-wrote all of the songs on the album and, while his lyrics are not as intense as Wonder's, he has a feel for words and music. He achieves some intersting effects with synthesizers and, while Stevie sometimes goes overboard with his use of them, here they are balanced with real horns, voices, and percussion.

But the Wonder connection is inevitable; Stevie hovers over this album like a ghost. "Is This Love," a duet Junior sings with Vera Scott, sounds very much like those Stevie did with Syreeta Wright. An "Let Me Know" ends on an Afro-Cuban beat much like Wonder's "Another Star."

Nevertheless, Junior is talented in his own right. His music is an interesting mixture of soul, jazz, and just a touch of rock. If albums 2 and 3 are as well done as this one, Junior should be a major recording artist for the next few years.

. . . and Two to Let Go

Original Musiquarium I. *Stevie Wonder* (Tamla 6002TL2)

And speaking of Stevie Wonder, his long awaited "new" album, entitled *Original Musiquarium I*, has arrived. However, by the time you read this, you may be as tired as I am of hearing it, since it's been played all over the radio. Of course, overkill is not difficult when there are only four new songs to choose from. And that's my complaint.

If Mr. Wonder wanted to do a "greatest hits" LP, then he should have done that. If he wanted to do a new album, then he should have done *that*. But to tack four new songs onto sixteen previously released sides that every Wonder fan already has, and then charge $14.98 (list) for the package is a bit much. It has to be one of the most blatant rip-offs ever attempted by a recording artist and is totally unexpected of someone like Stevie Wonder. Some place the blame on Motown and, in most instances, record company executives *do* make decisions that an artists has no choice but to go along with. However, this is not the case with Stevie Wonder. He is one of the few who have complete control over the product. There is no complaint about the music. It's good. But this album is not the priority purchase previous Stevie Wonder albums were. Apparently this opinion is shared by others because the album has not sold as well as expected. In fact, at least one record dealer has cut the price almost in half in order to help sales.

Perhaps, because he has been praised so much for so long and is thought of so highly, Wonder thinks he can do anything. I hope Mr. Wonder learns a lesson from this. Even "geniuses" are not infallible.

Jeffrey Osborne. *Jeffrey Osborne* (A&M SP-4896)

Another eagerly anticipated album was the solo debut of Jeffrey Osborne, former lead singer with the group LTD. It's easy to understand why "I Really Don't Need No Light" is the first single release from the album. It is clearly the best cut on this loud, mediocre LP. The rest of the music is generally dull and the lyrics inane as in "Eenie, Meenie, Minie, Moe, Catch a Lover by the Toe." This is unfortunate because Obsborne has a strong voice, nice range, and an interesting sound.

There is nothing on this album that compares with his work with LTD. Together, they produced some beautiful ballads, including "I Concentrate On You", "(Won't Cha) Stay With Me," and the classic "Love Ballad."

I would not recommend buying this album, unless you have $8.98 (list) that you have nothing better to do with. But if you must have Jeffrey Osborne, buy the 45 and wait; perhaps his second album will be better. —*S.B.*

by Sidney

In approximately two months, the political fate of several candidates will be decided. While there are a handful of ward

Electi

Brinkley

races going on, the contests receiving the most attention are those for chairman of the City Council and for mayor.

on '82

Election '82

The first is a three way battle among current chairman Arrington Dixon, Ward 1 councilmember David Clarke, and former City Council chairman Sterling Tucker. Tucker entered the race relatively late; many say *too* late. By the time Tucker, also a former candidate for mayor, announced his candidacy, much of his potential support had already been pledged to Clarke or Dixon.

Judged solely on the issue of gay rights, Clarke and Dixon have equally good records. However, Clarke has at least two substantial obstacles to overcome: one is a lack of name recognition, the other is the fact he's white. Although he has proven himself to be politically progressive by his support of such things as rent control and his efforts on behalf of the working poor, he is almost unknown outside of the ward he represents. As for race, Clarke correctly noted that, due to the shift to the right encouraged by the election of Ronald Reagan, "There is a growing racial distrust in the community." Blacks, whether gay or straight are just not ready for a white mayor *or* City Council chairman. But despite these obstacles, Clarke has been endorsed by The Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, the city's leading gay political organization, which means that many white gays will probably vote for him.

However, if the response Arrington Dixon received at a reception in his honor in early June is any indication, then he will be the overwhelming choice of Black gays. At that affair, which was attended by approximately 150 Black gay men and women, Dixon was warmly received. He has many ties within the Black community and is on a first name basis with several influential Black gays. Dixon has stressed the need for Blacks to remain in control of the city's government and that is something many Blacks want to hear.

But the main event is the race for mayor. What began as an eight way contest has become essentially a head to head race between the incumbent, Marion Barry, and his most serious challenger, Patricia Harris. Barry has raised nearly $700,00, a record for D.C. politics. Harris, as of June 10th, had reportedly raised approximately $300,000, and expects to raise at least $100,000 more in the next few weeks.

In the 1978 primary, Barry won by receiving 35% of all votes cast. At the time,several political observers said that the support of gay voters played an important role in his victory. Barry never forgot it. During the past 3½ years he has appointed numerous lesbians and gays to various boards and commissions. It is widely agreed that he has been one of the most progressive mayors in the country on the issue of gay rights. He too has been endorsed by Gertrude Stein and is the overwhelming favorite among political activists in the Black gay community. Furthermore, Barry's well known support of gays apparently has not hurt his popularity with the general electorate. According to the latest poll conducted by *The Washington Post*, he is clearly ahead of Pat Harris.

Yet, it appears that many Black gays are supporting Harris. Some feel Barry caters to the white gay community. Recently, after Barry had proclaimed a day in honor of a white gay businessman, one Black gay man angrily remarked, "That's why I'm voting for Harris; he's always in the faces of those white sissies."

But others cite reasons that have to do more with images than with issues. They consider Harris "a class act." Statements such as, "She's more sophisticated," or "She knows how to talk," are heard often. And while all these things appear to be true—Harris *is* the embodiment of those qualities upper middle class Blacks hold dear: intelligent, well-educated, well-spoken, professional in appearance and manner—their importance in determining how well a candidate will perform once elected is open to serious question. Unfortunately, Harris has given her supporters little else to defend themselves against the salvos fired by members of the Barry camp. Although she has mentioned, on several occasions, that position papers are in progress, those papers have yet to make an appearance in public. And, when questioned directly about her stand on a given issue, Harris, with her

continued on page 24

Untitled Love Poem I

In the midst of my confustion you came
with big black hands
and led me away from my distress
in the fact that pink panties
and adolescent breast
did nothing to excite my manhood
(which you taught me was more
than the liquor I could hold
or the meat between my legs).
On the street we appeared as brothers
as you charted a course that led us past
people my mother said to stay away from.
Behind closed doors we were lovers.
You caught me in my stumbling fall
as I ran from the other older men
chasing me out of my age of innocence.
From you I learned that addicts, whores,
and hustlers didn't always mean harm
were human and sometimes good company
and that loving another man didn't mean
being, acting, or even thinking like a woman
(or any imitation thereof).
But now that I have reached the age that
you were when we met I realize that
you never showed me how to plot a curve and
navigate back past the tracks in your arm,
the ten years of living between us, and
my disappointment in you so that I can lead you
away from the distress you presently find yourself in.
But I don't know how to reach over the image
of you and Wild Irish Rose
sleeping with the bums on Howard Street
or you locked-up in jail
hustling head for some "cebas" and a syringe.
But if I had a map I would come
to get you and bring you back to
Mt. Pleasant Street with all its inconsistencies
'cause that's what real friends are for
and the least that any lover would do
but I don't so I can't and as you
slip further away from yourself I sit here
gathering memories of Saturday afternoons,
sneaking to see you, and big black hands
molding young madness into a man
and wondering why? how? after you
did all this for me you cannot save yourself.

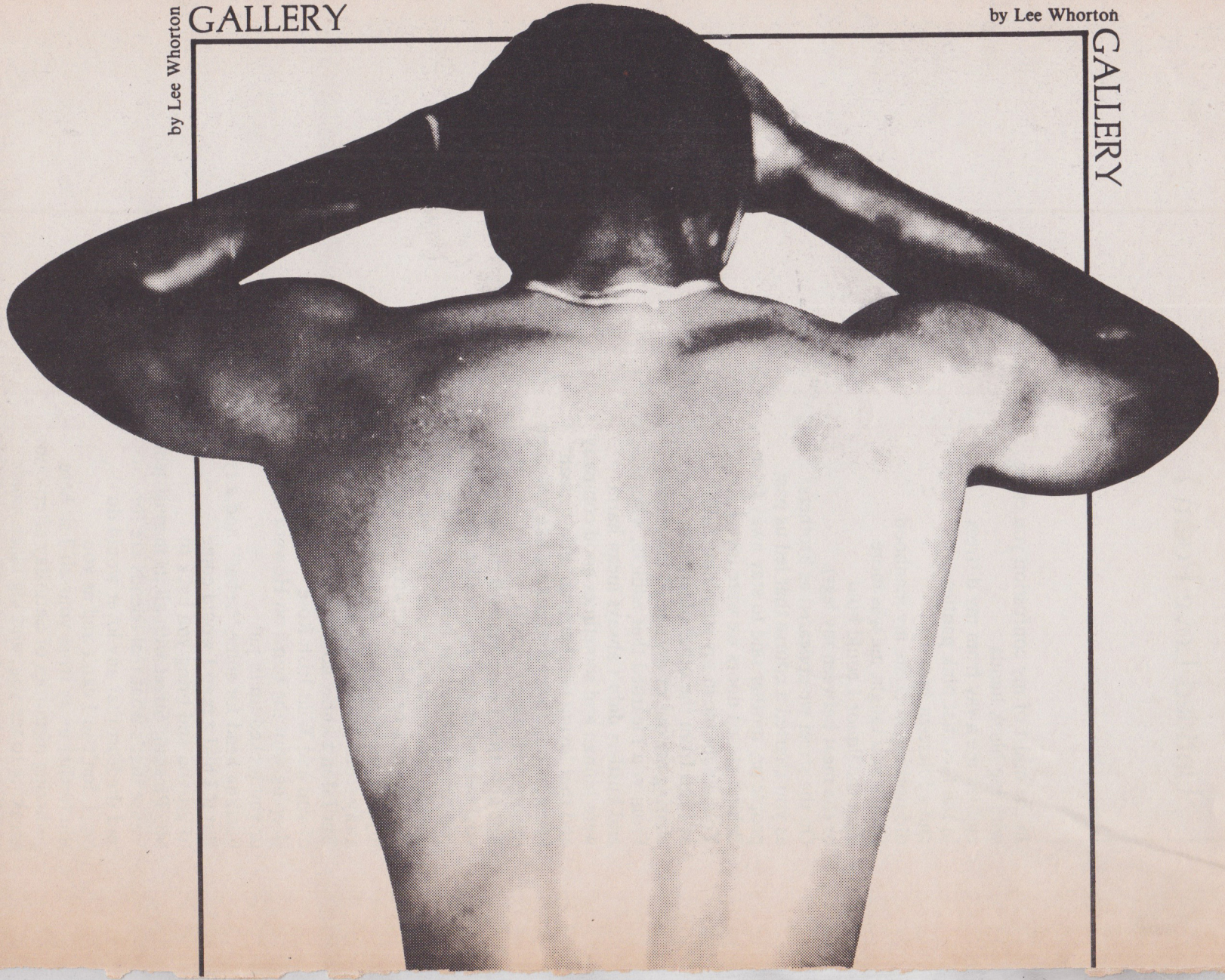
by C. S. Prince

GALLERY

by Lee Whorton

GALLERY

by Lee Whorton



GALLERY

by Lee Whorton

GALLERY

by Lee Whorton

REELECT MAYOR BARRY.

Photo: Lisa Berg

Mayor Barry greets Ray Melrose, president of the D.C. Coalition of Black Gays.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR COMMITMENT.

Marion Barry was committed to Gay Rights long before it became "politically correct" to do so. That commitment has provided Washington's Gay men and women with a quality of life unmatched by any city in America. As Mayor, he has appointed more than 30 Lesbians and Gay men to public offices affecting every aspect of city life.

Only Marion Barry has experience in managing local government; experience in coming to grips with problems and in organizing programs that solve those problems. That experience has delivered outstanding results:

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Public Safety. Over 10,000 citizens participate in the Neighborhood Watch Program. Each month one to two thousand citizens join this innovative anti-crime program. Additionally, this year alone, 242 police officers have been reassigned from administrative positions to neighborhood patrol duty. In 1978 there were 2,986 drug arrests; now, 5,813 drug arrests.

Fiscal Responsibility. For the first time in home rule history, we had a balanced budget; yet aid for housing, employment, education, programs for the elderly, mass transit, and the arts greatly increased. In 1978, an unbalanced budget; now, a balanced budget.

Commitment and Experience. Two qualities that have made Washington a capital city—for everyone. Let's keep it that way.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENCE.

REELECT MAYOR BARRY.

Citizens to Reelect Marion Barry, 707 14th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005

Paid for by Citizens to Reelect Marion Barry, Ann R. Kinney, Treasurer.

The Afro-American Artist

An Historical Perspective

Part three of a series

by Thurlow Evans Tibbs, Jr.

John Kennedy's "New Frontier" had special meaning for the Afro-American artist in the early 1960s, for it represented a challenge to overcome three major obstacles: the collaspe of serious and lasting private patronage, the disappearance of regional and national exhibitions where "qualified" judges could review the work, and the inability of artists to break into the commercial gallery scene.

There is little doubt that these factors contributed to low morale among artists and discouraged potential talent. The social chaos of the period seemed to divert attention from this important area of culture and several established institutions were allowed to wane or dissapear. In Washington, D.C., for example, the very important Barnet-Aden Gallery, which had been founded in the 1940s, significantly reduced its exhibition program after its director, Alonzo Aden, died in 1961.

As a response to these generally discouraging events,

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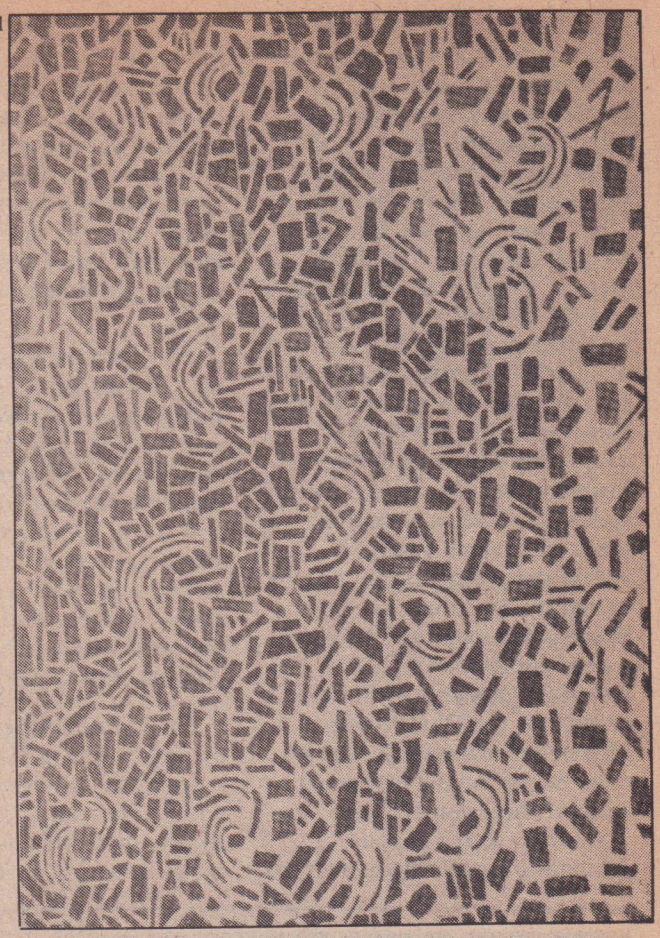

2

1 **Alma Thomas,** *Babbling Brook and Whistling Poplar Trees Symphony,* 1976
2 **Jeff Donaldson,** *God Bless the Child,* 1971

artists and others interested in preserving and promoting the arts, began to band together into cooperative-like groups which provided elements of emotional support as well as professional reinforcement.

Of these, one well known organization was The Spiral Group. The Spiral was founded in 1963 in New York City and included such established artists as Hale Woodruff (1900–1980), Romare Bearden (b. 1914), and Charles Alston (1907–1977). The group also included an art historian and an art restoration specialist. Two professional ideologies which emerged within the group continue to be of significant interest today. While some members suggested a need for expressing Afro-American imagery within the context of the Civil Rights Movement, others felt that art must be personally expressed without these restrictions.

Another group called Africobra-Farafindugu emerged in Chicago in 1968. Included among its members were Jeff Donaldson (b. 1932) and Frank Smith (b. 1935), both of whom are now at Howard University. Africobra was a more ideologically homogenous group than the Sprial. Historian Larry Neal summed up this movement well when he said:

The movement announced itself as "The African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists (Africobra)." In this aesthetic vocabulary, the term "Bad" means bold, aesthetic integrity, and social commitment. It further means an intention to project strong and engaging imagery; imagery that illuminates the beauty and glory of the African experience in the West.

The varied imagery employed by artists during this period suggests the unviversality of Afro-American artists and their ability, in a collective sense, to excell in several aesthetic channels. A survey of artists active during the period 1960–1980 reveals stylistic elements of realism, abstractionism, and surrealism. Intertwined with these artistic styles, we see the srtists making their individual statements. For example, we see in Elizabeth Catlett's (b. 1919) sculpture and in the graphic work of Charles White (1918–1980) an overwhelming concern to dignify the Afro-American image. Romare Bearden continues to document the historical and present day experiences of Afro-Americans through collage. This generation must also include the important mosaic-like abstractions of Alma Thomas (1896–1978), a member of the color field school, who documented her surroundings and feelings through the use of acrylics.

A newer generation of artists includes painters Sam Gilliam, (b. 1933) who uses acrylics on draped canvasses as metaphors

continued on page 26

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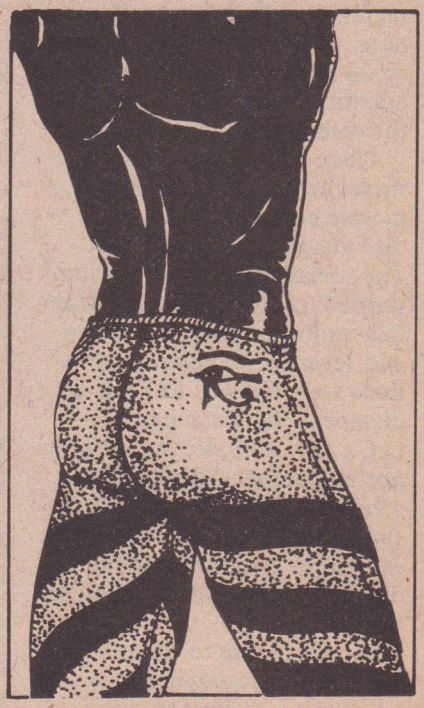

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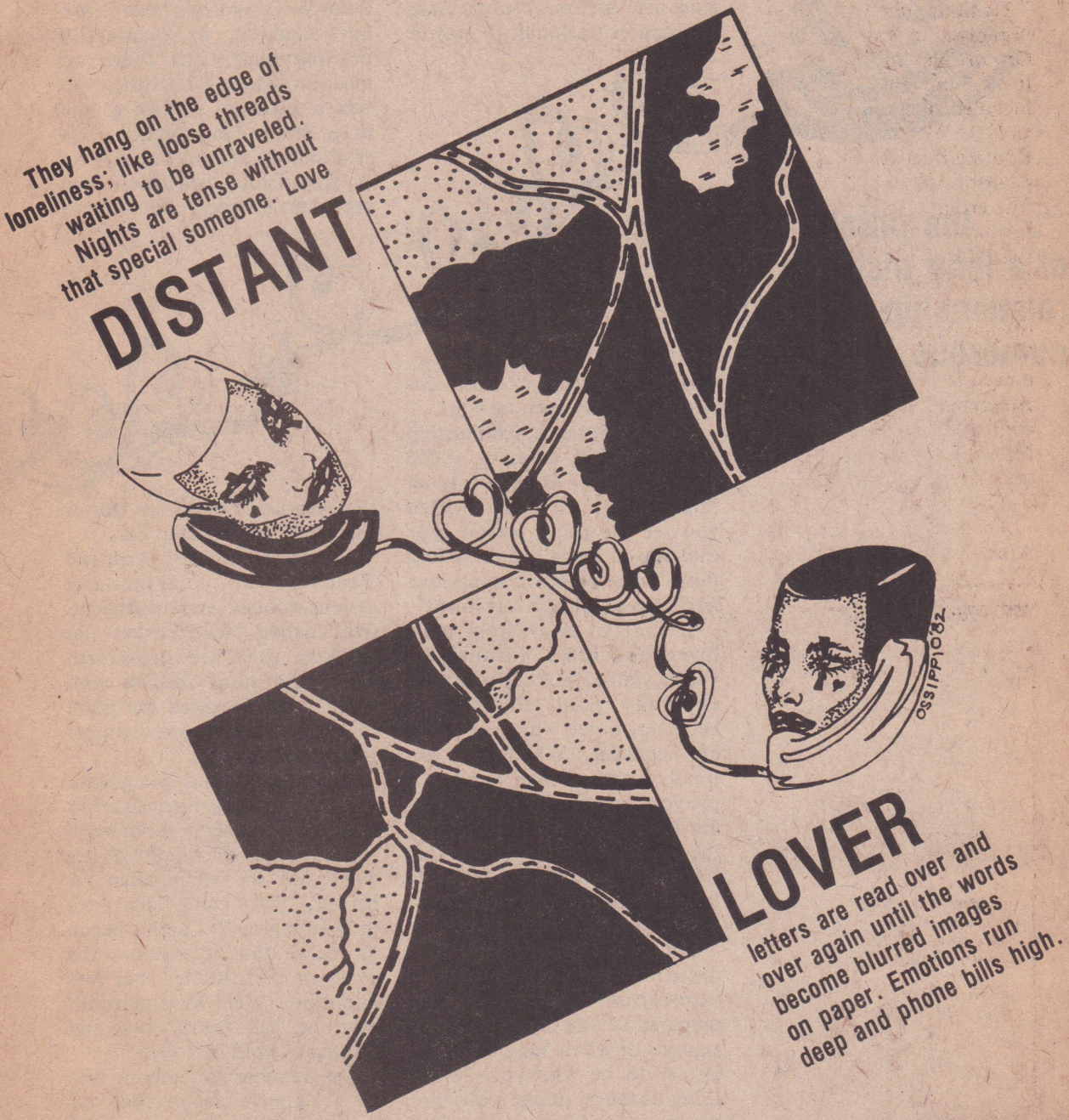
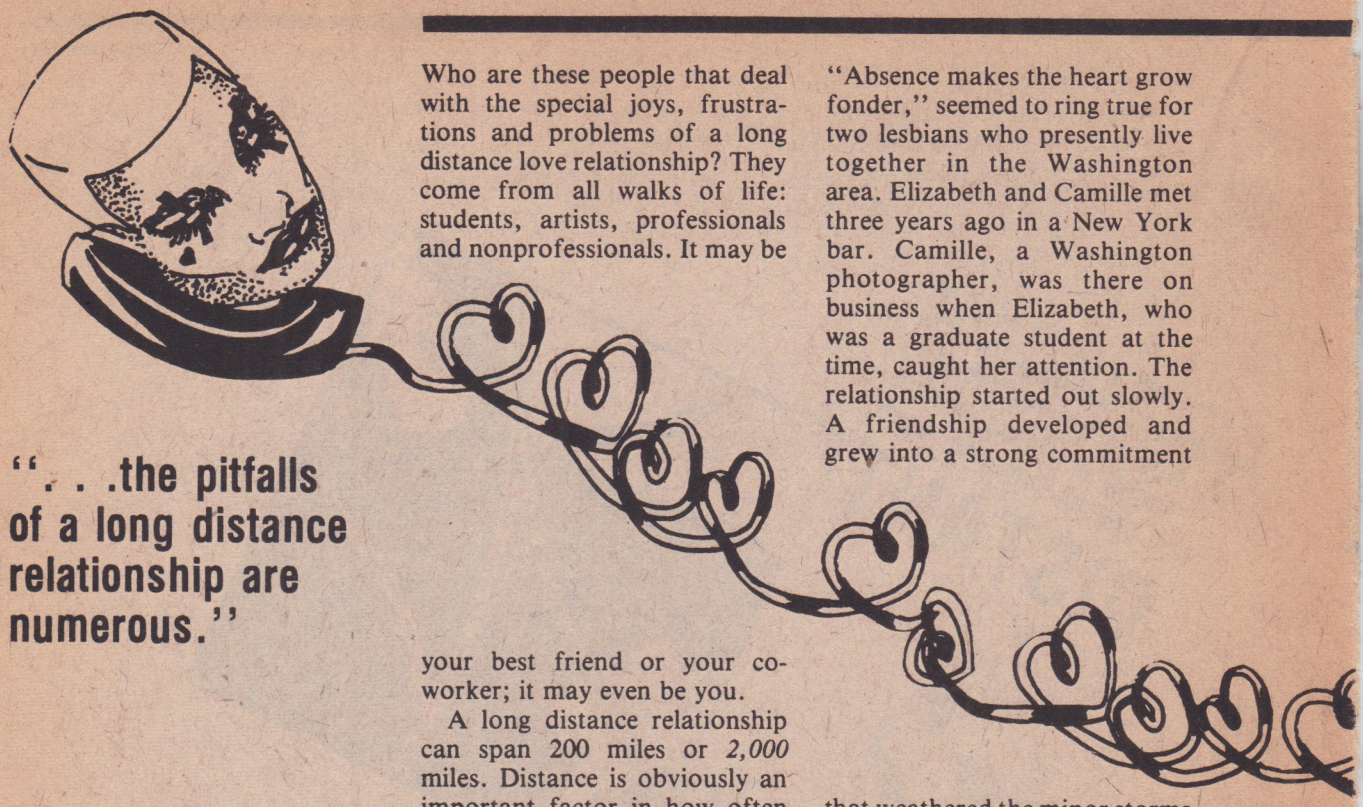


by Wanda P. Seay



". . .the pitfalls of a long distance relationship are numerous."

Who are these people that deal with the special joys, frustrations and problems of a long distance love relationship? They come from all walks of life: students, artists, professionals and nonprofessionals. It may be your best friend or your co-worker; it may even be you.

A long distance relationship can span 200 miles or *2,000* miles. Distance is obviously an important factor in how often you see the other person. For that reason alone people should think twice before leaping love first into such an involvement.

Living far away from your lover has some advantages. When you do not see someone everyday your chances of becoming bored with each other are lessened. When you are finally together, time becomes a precious commodity. Lovemaking is usually spontaneous and the pleasure is heightened. This type of relationship affords both partners plenty of emotional space.

But the pitfalls of a long distance relationship are numerous. You must be prepared to wait in airports, bus stations or travel long distances by car to be with your lover. Long-distance phone calls are expensive and may ultimately cause financial problems. In addition, too much time apart can contribute to infidelity. Some couples grow in different directions when they are geographically separated and may lose interest in the relationship.

The familar expression, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," seemed to ring true for two lesbians who presently live together in the Washington area. Elizabeth and Camille met three years ago in a New York bar. Camille, a Washington photographer, was there on business when Elizabeth, who was a graduate student at the time, caught her attention. The relationship started out slowly. A friendship developed and grew into a strong commitment that weathered the minor storms that every relationship has.

Elizabeth is a 32 year-old Teacher who is articulate, serious-minded and intelligent. This native New Yorker has freckles that are prominent against her honey brown complexion. She stressed the point that, "No obstacle was too great to keep us apart."

Camille, tall and outspoken, said that her long distance affair contributed to her peace of mind and improved the quality of her work. Still she would often ask herself, "Why can't I find love in Washington?" Camille began to realize that it was not the place or the distance that was important. What was important was she had found love and wanted to hold on to it.

On the other hand, many persons experience periods of depression, uncertainty, and disappointment. Aleena, a thirty year old Scorpio was gay for fifteen years and just recently turned straight. She was involved in three separate long distance relationships that turned sour. All of her former lovers were in the military and were stationed in places like Califor-

nia, Alaska, and Germany. Aleena, who wears long braids and has a seductive smile, said that she did everything she could to "keep the love alive." During the interview she was in a nostalgic mood and read many of her old love letters.

Peer pressure can also be a problem when you are involved in a long distance relationship. Philip, a robust male nurse, was told, "You should play the field because your lover is having a good time in Boston." However he preferred to remain faithful until his lover returned home from college. Another couple, Mike and Bob, are both in their early twenties and have been lovers for two years. Their relationship extends from the west coast (San Francisco, California) to the east coast (Washington, D.C.); however, it is understood that they both can date other people while they are apart.

A majority of the persons interviewed said they would not enter into a long distance relationship again. Some of the reasons cited were: "Traveling is too expensive," "Writing is too tiresome," and "The emotional turmoil was too much." Others felt the rewards outweighed the problems. A male friend of mine considers his long distance relaitonship, "the best of both worlds." His lover lives here for six months out of the year then returns to the west coast. My friend, who is a writer, finds time to pursue his own career and other interests.

There are many different ways to keep the relationship from becoming stale. Phone calls, love letters, telegrams, and tape recordings add spice to such a relationship. One lesbian recalled "writing every night." One couple would exchange small gifts each time one of them visited the other.

The long distance relationship has become a way of life for many people. In search of a job, some people may have to relocate to find a suitable one. The military may separate lovers for a period of time. The pursuit of an education is another factor responsible for a long distance love affair.

Whatever the reason, an increasing number of people seem to be involved in long distance relationships. The average length for those cited in this article was two years, although some lasted less than six months. But everyone seemed to find dating someone from another city exciting.

In order for any relationship to survive, the people involved must be willing to work together and make compromises. This is espeicially true for long distance relationships which require a great deal of tender loving care. Honesty and open communication are key words in making the relationship a permanent one.

Although, as the Paul Simon song said, there may be "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover," there are also that many reasons for "hanging in there" and making the long distance relationship survive the odds against it. ■

". . ., the people involved must be willing to work together . . ."

Pleated seersucker shorts by Reminiscence, about $32.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF SUMMER FASHION

Illustrated by Eric Marlowe

Pleated cotton carpenter's pants by Dash, about $125.

Cotton-polyester jogging pant by Calvin Klein, about $48.
Back-pocketed walk shorts in cotton by Calvin Klein, about $30.

Election '82

continued from page 12

characteristic quick thinking and accomplished verbal skills, has succeeded often in avoiding direct answers.

But it seems that this failure to address specific issues has not deterred her Black gay supporters. Prior to her interview with *The Washington Blade*, in which she first stated her position on gays and gay rights, Harris was a guest at several informal gatherings given Black gays. She was able to garner considerable support from the gays and Lesbians who attended these functions, although her position was then unknown.

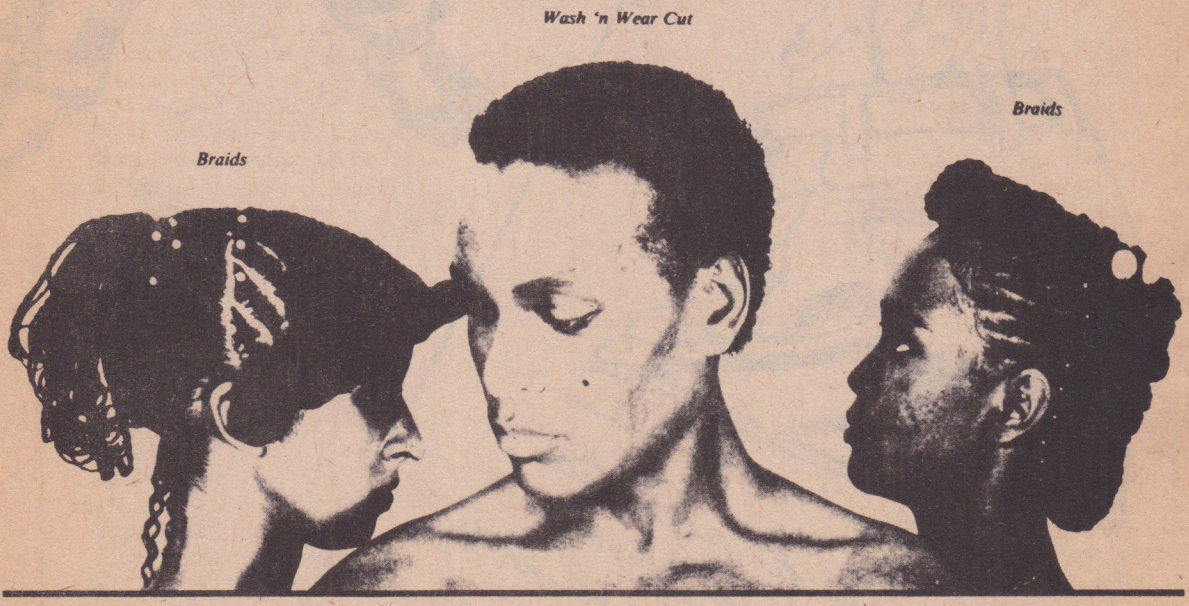
Harris does not appear to be anti-gay politically . She has some openly gay Blacks on her campaign staff and she has named a Black gay student from George Washington University to act as her liaison to the gay community. (It should perhaps be noted here that Barry's liaison is, indeed, white.)

But neither is Harris *pro*-gay; at least, not in the style of Barry. When questioned about her stand on gay issues, she gives cautious support. "I don't care what anybody does in the privacy of their home," she says, or "The state has no place in the bedroom." Both statements are "politically correct", but echo those used by heterosexuals trying to prove their "liberalism." Harris obviously does not want to antagonize gays by taking a hard line, but neither, apparently, does she wish to alienate the support of the more conservative Black upper-middle class, some of whom feel that Barry has gone overboard in his support of gay rights.

Like Barry, Harris has received her share of criticism from the gay community. There was some early concern about Doug Moore, the former councilmember, being involved in her campaign. Moore once referred to gays as "fascist faggots", and is not well liked, to say the least, by many in either the Black or the white gay community. When questioned about Moore during a visit with the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), Harris emphasized the fact that she is "independent" and that Doug Moore did not tell her how to think. She went on to say that Doug Moore is her friend, and she had no intentions of asking him to leave her campaign. For Harris, the issue was settled; for many gays, it was not.

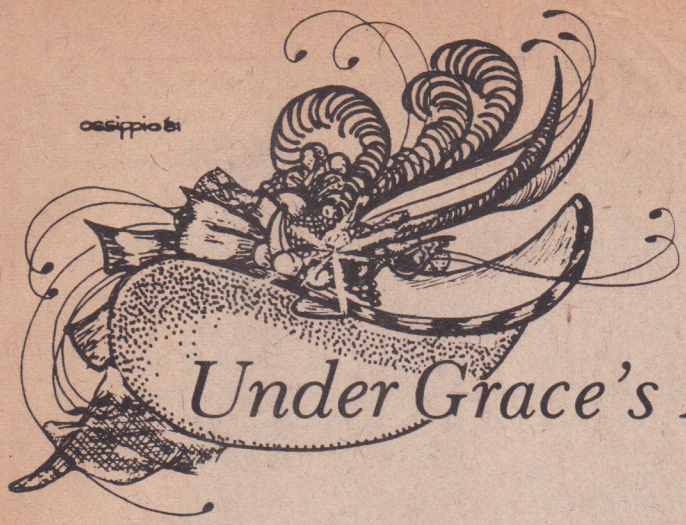
Early polls of the general public showed Patricia Harris ahead of Marion Barry. Now their positions are reversed. But, as Barry has pointed out, and, as Harris would surely agree, the only poll that counts is the one taken on September 14, 1982. ■

Next issue: *Conversations with Patricia Harris and Marion Barry*



Keyes West
Hair Fair Salon

Harlem YMCA, 180 West 135th St New York City. 690-1450.



Under Grace's Hat

by Grace

Well, here we are together again at last. Grace hopes you are having as wonderful a summer as she is. Grace has attended cookouts, picnics, cocktail parties, and weekends at Virginia Beach. It's all been *so* lovely and the summer's only half over. But it has not been all play and no work. Grace has been working very hard on her first *book*. Yes, darlings, writing this column has truly inspired me. The book is called *Grace's Guide for Giving Affairs, Parties, Get Togethers, and Anything Else That Should Be Done Right*. It will be available to the general public soon. And judging by the affairs some of you give, heaven knows many of you need it.

Speaking of affairs, Grace hears she upset some nerves (again) last issue due to her comments about certain social clubs. Why, someone even accused her of waging a vendetta against a certain group. Darlings, Grace does not deal in vendettas; Grace deals in *truth*.

To avoid any confusion in the future, Grace thought she would explain. If a club gives a public event, then it is open to public comment. Now, if your club gives fabulous affairs, then, have no fear, Grace will acknowledge it. But Grace is understanding; she knows that fabulous affairs are only given by true divas, and we are hard to come by these days. So, she is willing to settle for a "nice" affair from most of you, however there is another category and that is "tired". As you know, some of the children will give you a tired affair, and expect you to pay for it! Any club, organization, or person that gets three tired ratings will be sent a copy of *Grace's Guide*, free of charge. Grace understands that egos are involved and reputations are at stake but, as mother used to say, "If you cant stand the heat. . ." Grace will say no more.

Now, as Grace was saying earlier everyone has just been so social lately. Why, the way some of the children have been carrying on, you would hardly believe there is a depression going on. I hardly know where to begin, but Grace will start on June 5, a very busy day in and around town. Grace hears there was quite a gathering at **The Evans-Tibbs Gallery** for **Arrington Dixon**. Of course **Mr. Tibbs** is the perfect host and his affairs are always so well done. There's always some form of live, but subdued, entertainment and guests drink from *real* wine glasses—no plastic cups here. The affair was sponsored by **Phil Pannell** and, while Grace *could* write a paragraph about that one, she tries her best to rise above such things and, so far, she's succeeded. . . . Later that same evening, **The Best Of Washington** held another "All Night Strut." Though it was not quite like the "Struts" of not too long ago, when a slightly different group of people were involved in the planning, it was still . . . nice. Grace was told that the club was "trying to change its image." She did not ask what that image is or will be. Some things one just does not ask. . . . Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, **Mox Nix** gave its annual cocktail party. All of the grand children tried to make that one and Grace *could* name names. However, since that is an "older" crowd from another era, the excitement of seeing one's name in print would probably cause mass coronaries and Grace refuses to wear Black during the summer. As for the affair, one attendee summed it up this way, "If you been to one, you've been to them all." Hardly original, but undoubtedly appropriate. . .

The July 4th weekend was another busy time in D.C. **The Pinochle Club** had its annual affair. And Grace must say she was shocked, no, *appalled* when she received her invitation. It was typewritten on two sheets of folded colored paper and looked as if it had been run off at the corner copy center. What's more, it was an all or nothing-at-all package deal for $45.00. Now Grace has some sisters in that club that she loves dearly. But as a group they are old enough to know better. This is their second *faux pas* this year. The first was that dreadful Valentine's Day affair. Obviously, this club is now a strong contender for the first free copy of *Grace's Guide*. As for this last affair, Grace did not attend. She gave *her* money to Garfinckel's where this lovely hat was on sale. Yes, dears, Grace has bought a new hat; something light and airy for the summer . . . but, back to business. The Pinochle Club is not the only club in the running for a gratis *Grace's Guide*. . . . **Family Inc.** is giving them strong competition. They had their Independence Day affair on July 2nd. It was held at the old Post Lodge on Capitol Hill, and *that* was the problem. Grace understands that money is tight and some groups choose to give affairs in places such as the Lodge because it is cheap. Well, it certainly is cheap . . . and tacky. One can't have a "nice" affair in "tired" surroundings. Watch it fellows, Grace already has an envelope with your club's name on it. . . . Now, **The Houston Committee's** "Annual Conclave" was a fabulous affair. These children do not waste time, money, and energy giving several small affairs each year. Instead, they give one *grand* affair and this year was no exception. The affair consisted of *ten* events

Under Grace's Hat

spread over *four* days and included two seminars on consumer affairs and investments. It is truly one of the grand events of the summer given by one of the premier Black groups in the country. Grace suggests that you start saving your pennies now so you can attend next year's party.

If you missed **Glen Elliot's** performance at **La Zambra** in July, Grace hears he will be making a return engagement in August. Believe me, he is not to be missed. Mr. Elliott took drag to another level and the children loved it. . . . If you noticed a lot of ebony and ivory around town at one point, perhaps it was because **Black and White Men Together** held their annual convention here recently. **Steve Lynch** gave a party for them one evening at his Capitol Hill home. Though Grace did not attend —she likes her meat dark—she heard it was quite a party. Of course, Mr. Lynch is a veteran party-giver and Grace would not expect anything less from him. . . . Have you heard about that couple in Virginia that appear so very loving in public while behind closed doors its a very different story? Well, it seems as if one of them was making quite a few trips across the 14th Street bridge to visit a hot little number that resides in that building at 16th and Columbia Road where all the children live. Well, everything was fine for several weeks until No. 2 decided he wanted to be No. 1 and thought he would hasten things along by calling No. 1 and informing him of where his lover was spending his time (*very* tacky). As you can imagine, the whole thing became very messy. However, what No. 2 didn't know was that, while he had the *looks*, No. 1 had the *money* and when he threatened to close the checking account and reposses the car, Columbia Road was quickly dropped. Now Ms. Thing is running around in a deep depression. But she learned what many of us already know; never trust a man who runs around on his lover. And with that, Grace feels she has said quite enough this issue. See you next time. ■

The Afro-American Artist

continued from page 18

of his personal experiences; sculptor Richard Hunt (b. 1935), whose sensual abstractions lift the spirit or pose in-depth questions; and Betye Saar (b. 1926), who uses box-like constructions fashioned out of "found" materials to portray the Afro-American experience.

What is clear is that these various artistic channels are constantly converging to effect an important art form of learned and natural expression which is nearing a zenith.

In the 1970s three trends surfaced that promised some measure of hope toward lasting attention and patronage for the Afro-American artist. First was the building of collections of Afro-American art by corporations such as Golden state Mutual Life Insurance Co., Atlanta Life, and Johnson Publications. Second was the active collecting of Afro-American art by such media personalities as Max Robinson in Chicago and Bill Cosby in California. Third and most important was the establishment of institutions dedicated to the exhibition and preservation of works by Afro-American artists. This constantly growing list includes the Dusable Museum in Chicago, Afro-American museums in Boston, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Evan-Tibbs Collection in Washington, D.C.

What is encouraging about these trends is that, unlike the limited patronage of the 1930s and 1940s, they have been initiated and managed by dedicated and concerned Afro-Americans. This clearly points up the realization of intragroup responsibilities toward preserving the culture.

However, there are two disturbing elements int he present configuration of Afro-American art. First, many of our museums would and do suffer when government or corporate support is lessened or withdrawn. Second, there appears to be no successful commercial gallery that deals primarily in work by Afro-American artists; successful being defined as having regular exhibitions, publishing catalogs, and arranging museum purchases.

So, while there are encouraging signs on the Afro-American art scene, it is obvious that there is still much to be done. More support from the business community would certainly help, but only dramatically increased public support, through attendance and, most improtantly, through purchases, can lead to the success the Afro-American artist so richly deserves. ■

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BGM 33, handsome, intelligent and financially secure seeks Black woman gay or straight to have 1 or possibly 2 children. No interest in marriage, just wants to be a father. Serious replies only. Write J. Thomas, P.O. BOX 352, Washington, D.C. 20009

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Hey, what's happening? I'm professional, Black, 34, 5'11", 178 lbs., well-built and versatile. Interested in Blacks or P.R.s only. Call (312) 723-1388 or Box 20532, Chicago, Ill. 60620. Photo/Douglas

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Black male, late 40s, 5'9", 175 lbs. seeks masculine, versatile, straight-looking and acting males of all races. Enjoy well-hung dudes 30 and up. Photo if possible. Rich, 6522 7th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20012

Lesbian S/M Support Group—Social and discussion group. Meet other S/M Lesbians. Write P.O. Box 4623, Arl. VA 22204

Black male in Baltimore area wants to communicate with other Black males in the same area. Am 33, single, masc. wishing to meet others who enjoy life and its pleasures. No fems or non-Blacks. Lee, Box 193, Owings Mill, Md. 21117

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BLACKLIGHT Prison Project

My name is Patrick Luckett and I am a 27 year old Black male. Loneliness in a place like this is almost unbearable. It's very much like that of a quiet drama which keeps building and building without end. I have no wish to be swallowed up by what appears to be a vacuum of emptiness, nor do I wish to remain just a faint echo of a hidden shadow. I seek not pity, but rather a more meaningful understanding of others as well as myself. Please write. Mr. Patrick Luckett #157892, P.O. Box 45699, Lucasville Ohio, 45699-0001

My name is Chris. I'm 6'2" tall, formerly a fashion model and photographer. I am 33 years old and Black. My interests are music, horseback riding, backgammon, and reading. I'm uninhibited and have no racial hang-ups. I will write anyone who is willing to correspond with me. Chris A. Mitchell No. 165-373, P.O. Box 45699, Lucasville, Ohio 45699

My name is Foster Brown. I'm 29, six feet even, and weight 175 pounds. I am originally from D.C. and I've lost contact with some dear childhood friends that I'm sure read this publication. I would love to establish contact with some of you. Foster Brown #068373, P.O. Box 747, Starke, Florida 32091

I have tried corresponding before, but I guess it's a letdown or a turnoff to outside society because of the situation that I'm in. Being in prison is rough, and very lonely when you can't seem to find an outside person to understand you. This is my first time in prison and it is quite hard for me. I have been sentenced to 20 years, but I may only have to serve 10. No one here knows I'm gay. I hide it because of the trouble it may bring: rapes, beatings, etc. My name is Jesse L. Teague. I'm 25 years old, 5'11", 150 pounds, slim, and have a light brown complexion. I love to write and hope there is a person out there willing to share some time with a gay prisoner. Jesse L. Teague #19466, P.O. Box 41, Michigan City, Indiana 46360.

I am trying to establish a sincere relationship with someone who will be willing to write. I'm 28 years old, 5'10" tall, and weigh 148 lbs. I love writing, reading, and sports. I play bridge and I'm a very good chess player. I am also very lonely. Please, someone please write me. I will answer all letters. Larry Cash, #150-946, P.O. BOX 45699, Lucasville, Ohio 45699-0001

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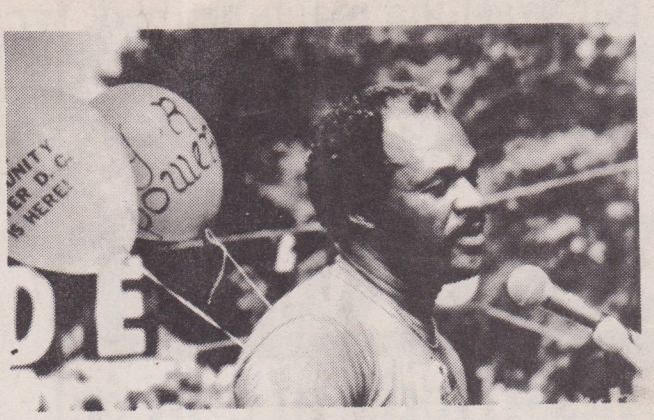

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